

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 04607 110850Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08 NSC-05
TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 L-03 SAA-01 (ISO) W
-----075669 120953Z /10

R 110753Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9163
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USDOC WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EAID, SY
SUBJECT: SMITH, KLINE AND FRENCH; STATUS OF BOYCOTT PROBLEM

1. EMBOFF RECENTLY TALKED WITH CHRISTOPHER HARRIS, MIDDLE EAST MANAGER OF SUBJECT FIRM ABOUT THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING SMITH, KLINE AND FRENCH (SKF) BOYCOTT PROBLEMS WITH CENTRAL BOYCOTT OFFICE (CBO). (SKF INDIAN SUBSIDIARY HAD PURCHASED RAW MATERIAL FROM ISRAEL, A FACT WHICH CAME TO CBO'S ATTENTION. CBO HAS SINCE SENT AN EIGHT-POINT QUESTIONNAIRE TO FIRM.)

2. HARRIS SAID THAT CBO HAS ASKED THE NATIONAL BOYCOTT OFFICES FOR THEIR OPINIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS, WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT CBO WAS PUTTING MATTER TO A VOTE. KUWAIT AND JORDAN HAVE REPLIED THAT ONLY INDIAN SUBSIDIARY SHOULD BE PLACED ON BOYCOTT LIST, WHILE EGYPT HAS RECOMMENDED THAT SKF BE PLACED ON LIST AS WELL. THE SYRIAN POSITION WAS UNCLEAR, ALTHOUGH
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SYRIANS WERE KNOWN TO HAVE EXPRESSED WONDER AT KUWAIT'S SOFT LINE AND HAD ASKED POINTEDLY WHETHER KUWAIT OFFICE HAD RECEIVED OUTSIDE PRESSURE. (HARRIS SAID SKF AGENT IN KUWAIT, YUSUF AHMED AL-GHANIM, HAD STEERED CLEAR OF THE MATTER.) NO OTHER COUNTRY HAS AS YET REPLIED. HARRIS FELT THAT CBO WOULD NOT TAKE DEFINITE ACTION UNTIL AFTER RAMADHAN AT VERY EARLIEST AND PROBABLY NOT

FOR THREE MONTHS.

3. HARRIS CHARACTERIZED CBO ATTITUDE AS HARD-NOSED. SKF HAD ASKED ON WHAT BASIS CBO WAS OPERATING IN SENDING QUESTIONNAIRE AND RECEIVED BLISTERING REPLY THAT, IN SO MANY WORDS, THIS WAS NONE OF SKF'S BUSINESS. LOCAL LAWYER FOR SKF HAD TOLD HARRIS THAT CBO AT LAST REGIONAL MEETING HAD DECIDED TO MAKE QTE TRADING WITH ISRAEL UNQTE A POSSIBLE CRITERIA FOR TAKING ACTION AGAINST FOREIGN COMPANIES. HARRIS COULD NOT SAY WHETHER THIS REPRESENTED MAJOR TIGHTENING OR JUST A WAY TO PROVIDE CBO WITH MORE ROOM FOR MANEUVER.

4. HARRIS ALSO NOTED THAT OF EIGHT POINTS ALREADY ASKED, SKF HAD BEEN ABLE TO ANSWER FIRST SEVEN SATISFACTORILY. SKF HAS BALKED, HOWEVER, ON PROMISING NOT TO DO BUSINESS WITH ISRAEL IN THE FUTURE. SEELYE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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